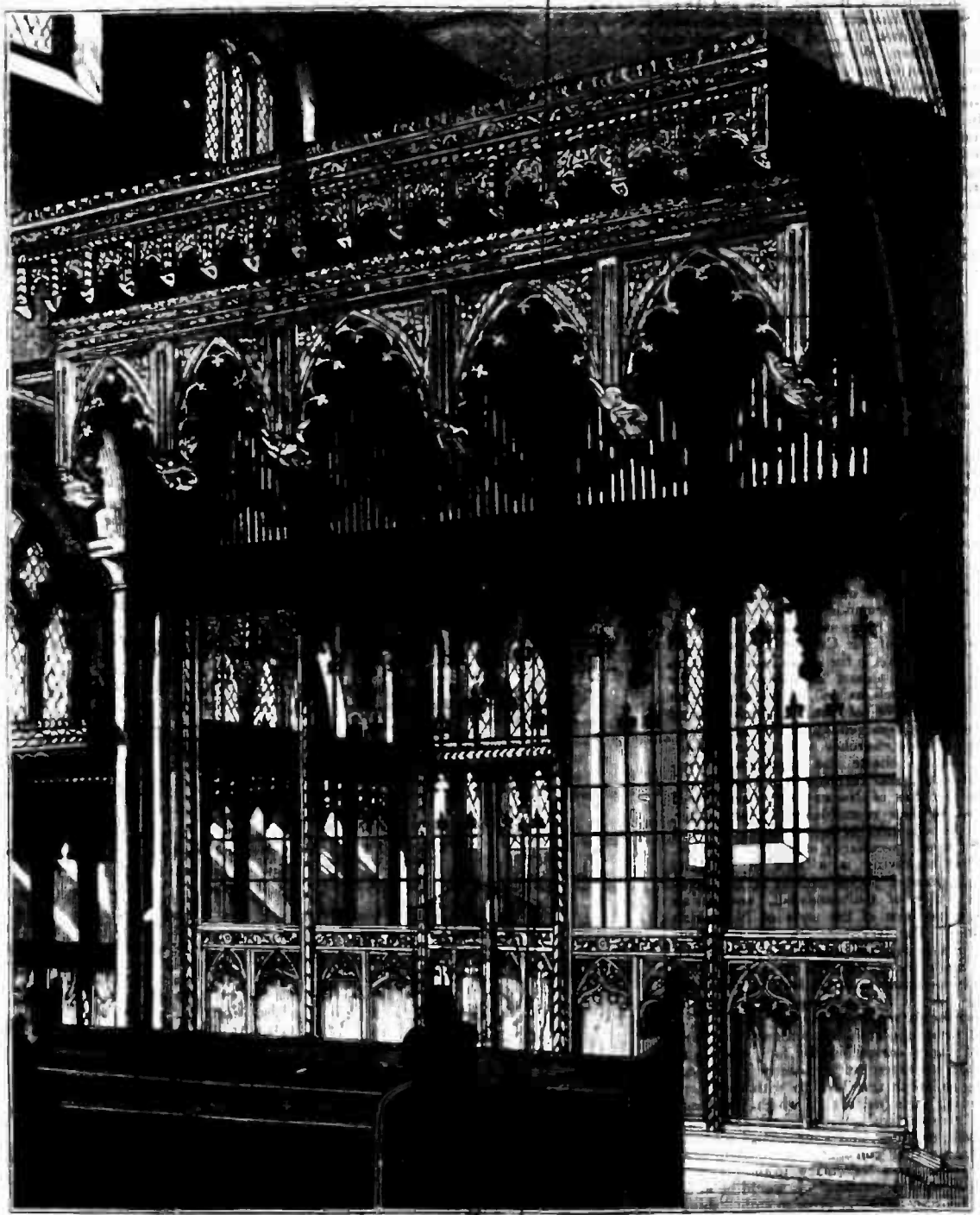
ROOD SCREEN, SEFTON CHURCH, LANCASHIRE.



ROOD SCREEN, SEFTON CHURCH.

The village of Sefton, in Lancashire, is about eight miles from Liverpool, a little to the left of the high road to Ormskirk: it is situated on an extensive range of fine flat meadows, that reach almost to the sea, and which are annually irrigated by the Alt, a small trout stream. It is a parish and manor, and formerly belonged to the Molineuxes, who possessed it from their Norman ancestor, William de Molines. It was granted to him by Roger de Poictiers, to whom the Conqueror had given all the lands between the Ribble and the Mersey. Previous to that event this manor was held by five Thanes.

The church, which is dedicated to St. Helen, is said to have been erected in the time of Henry VIII., by Anthony Molineux, rector of the place; but a part of it has evidently been built at an earlier period, from the various styles of the windows, and the unconnected manner in which the walls are jointed, particularly on the north side: there are also two effigies of knights templars, branches of this family, one of which in the present state of the church does not appear to have a proper situation; and on the stalls, screens, &c., there is a repetition of the initials I·M, which must allude to some other member of the family.

The chancel is divided by a screen from the body of the church, and contains stalls arranged alphabetically; the style of the letters is unique, being in unison with the general character of the ornaments, and is perhaps the most complete specimen of the kind extant. They are represented in the twenty-fourth plate of Bridgen's work on Sefton Church. In the chancel and chancel aisles, for a series of ages, have been deposited the remains of the Molineux family; and several of the monumental memorials of the illustrious house are still preserved. Around an altar tomb is an inscription in memory of Sir Richard Molineu and Joan his wife, who died in 1439; there are effigies in brass of Sir William Molineux and his two wives and thirteen children; also of Sir William, son of the above, his two wives and six children. Four of the plates are lost. The one bearing the inscription is preserved, of which the following is a translation:—"Sir William Molineux, Knight, lord of the manor of Sefton, who was sent three times against the Scots by Henry VIII. of England; in war he fought most courageously, and at Flodden, with his own hands, took two of the Scottish banners in spite of all their resistance: in peace he was the friend of all mankind, assisting with his counsel those who wanted advice, and with his purse those who wanted money;

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